REMARKS

The Applicant respectfully requests further examination and reconsideration in view of the amendments above and the arguments set forth fully below. Claims 1-38 were previously pending in this application. Within the Office Action, claims 1-38 have been rejected. By the above amendments, claims 1, 4, 5, 11, 14, 15, 21, 24, 25, 31, 34, and 35 are amended. Accordingly, claims 1-38 are currently pending in this application.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(e)

Within the Office Action, claims 1-3, 6-13, 16-23, 26-33 and 36-38 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,253,188 issued to Witek et al. (hereafter "Witek"). The Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection for the following reasons.

Witek teaches a system and method for providing classified ads over the Internet. Internet users can connect to a Newspaper web server and central Web application server to search for and obtain classified ads. Ad records are stored in ad database servers 20 for providing classified ad records on request to application servers 16. To search the ad records, the search process is divided into two principle parts. The first part includes a system entry and pre-selection sequence, and the second part includes a record selection sequence (Witek, col. 12, lines 10-13). More specifically, in the first part the user enters the system and specifies the category of classified ads to be searched. Thereafter, as the user navigates to the respective selected category, the user further specifies a subcategory for the particular category selected (Witek, col. 12, lines 27-37). The selected category and subcategory pair is identified by a category/subcategory ID 46. The second part of the search process includes entering a formal record selection query containing the specific parameters for the ad records the user wishes to see. The specific parameters are entered as primary selection parameters 60 and as secondary selection parameters 62. In summary, the first part of the search process is limited to performing searches based on category, or in other words a hierarchical search (Witek, col. 13, lines 30-46). The second part of the search process is limited to performing searches based on entered parameters, in other words keyword search or parametric search.

Search criteria entered into a keyword search text field is a text string, and parameters set using the parametric search are set parameter values. A user entering a text string or setting a parameter value, as part of using the keyword search and the parametric search, is simply inputting parameter values.

In contrast, the present invention teaches accessing a node within a directory tree structure using a query language string, where the query language string is a command string written according to a query language. The query language string designates at least the navigation through the directory tree structure to access a specific node or a discrete data item within the directory (Specification, page 30, lines 26-27). The structure of the query language of the present invention is preferably similar to that of SQL (structured query language), but it is specific to the combined technologies of accessing the directory tree structure and setting parameters for a search (Specification, page 31, lines6-8). The query language string is a third generation language used to perform queries in the research system of the present invention. An exemplary query language string is:

IQUERY <instance node>/<instance name> LIST * FROM <node key>
WHERE commercial = Y
AND LINK DESC CONTAINS "Chevrolet";

Clearly, using a query language to form a query language string is more than simply inputting parameter values. The query language string is a compilation of specified parameters values and commands, placed in the proper format, to be executed directly by the computer system. The query language string is the command string used to execute a search by the computer system. Search results are obtained as a result of the executed query language string. A user query as described by Witek defines search parameter values, these values are to be used in a subsequent search. However, as raw data, the search parameter values are not sufficient to actually execute the search. The search parameter values must be formatted within a command string in order to be used to perform a search. As such, a user query, as defined by Witek, is not the same as a query language string, as claimed in the present invention.

The independent claim 1 is directed to a method of accessing information within an electronic system. The method of claim 1 comprises the steps of formatting a searchable database within the electronic system into a directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, wherein each related item of data is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, each parameter is set with a corresponding value associated with the data item thereby forming a set parameter, wherein the parameters are specific to the node in which the related data is included, and accessing a node within the

directory tree structure using a query language string, wherein the query language string is a command string written according to a query language that defines a navigation path through the directory tree structure to access a specific node within the directory tree structure. As discussed above, Witek does not teach accessing a node using a query language string. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 1 is allowable over the teachings of Witek.

Claims 2, 3 and 6-10 depend on the independent claim 1. As described above, the independent claim 1 is allowable over the teachings of Witek. Accordingly, claims 2, 3 and 6-10 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

The independent claim 11 is directed to a research system for accessing information within an electronic system. The research system of claim 11 comprises means for formatting a searchable database within the electronic system into a directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, wherein each related item of data is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, each parameter is set with a corresponding value associated with the data item thereby forming a set parameter, wherein the parameters are specific to the node in which the related data is included, and means for accessing a node within the directory tree structure using a query language string, wherein the query language string is a command string written according to a query language that defines a navigation path through the directory tree structure to access a specific node within the directory tree structure. As discussed above, Witek does not teach accessing a node using a query language string. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 11 is allowable over the teachings of Witek.

Claims 12, 13 and 16-20 depend on the independent claim 11. As described above, the independent claim 11 is allowable over the teachings of Witek. Accordingly, claims 12, 13 and 16-20 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

The independent claim 21 is directed to a research system for accessing information within an electronic system. The research system of claim 21 comprises a a research server configured to format a searchable database within the electronic system into a directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, wherein each related item of data is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, each parameter is set with a corresponding value associated with the data item thereby forming a set parameter, wherein the parameters are specific to the node in which the related data is included,

and to access a node within the directory tree structure using a query language string, wherein the query language string is a command string written according to a query language that defines a navigation path through the directory tree structure to access a specific node within the directory tree structure. As discussed above, Witek does not teach accessing a node using a query language string. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 21 is allowable over the teachings of Witek.

Claims 22, 23 and 26-30 depend on the independent claim 21. As described above, the independent claim 21 is allowable over the teachings of Witek. Accordingly, claims 22, 23 and 26-30 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

The independent claim 31 is directed to a network of devices for accessing information within an electronic system. The network of devices of claim 31 comprises one or more computer systems configured to establish a connection with other systems, and a research server coupled to the one or more computer systems to format a searchable database within the electronic system into a directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, wherein each related item of data is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, each parameter is set with a corresponding value associated with the data item thereby forming a set parameter, wherein the parameters are specific to the node in which the related data is included, and to access a node within the directory tree structure using a query language string, wherein the query language string is a command string written according to a query language that defines a navigation path through the directory tree structure to access a specific node within the directory tree structure. As discussed above, Witek does not teach accessing a node using a query language string. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 31 is allowable over the teachings of Witek.

Claims 32, 33 and 36-38 depend on the independent claim 31. As described above, the independent claim 31 is allowable over the teachings of Witek. Accordingly, claims 32, 33 and 36-38 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Within the Office Action, claims 4, 5, 14, 15, 24, 25, 34 and 35 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Witek in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,292,796 issued to Drucker et al. (hereafter "Drucker").

Claims 4 and 5 are dependent on the independent claim 1. Claims 14 and 15 are dependent on the independent claim 11. Claims 24 and 25 are dependent on the independent claim 21. Claims 34 and 35 are dependent on the independent claim 31. As discussed above, the independent claims 1, 11, 21, and 31 are each allowable over the teachings of Witek. Accordingly, claims 4, 5, 14, 15, 24, 25, 34 and 35 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

For the reasons given above, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-38 are now in a condition for allowance, and allowance at an early date would be appreciated. Should the Examiner have any questions or comments, he/she is encouraged to call the undersigned attorney at (408) 530-9700.

Respectfully submitted,
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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING (37 CFR§ 1.8(a))

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Date: 11-26-04 By: John D. Lassen